

# Eliminating Syphilis

## Forsyth County (Winston-Salem), North Carolina

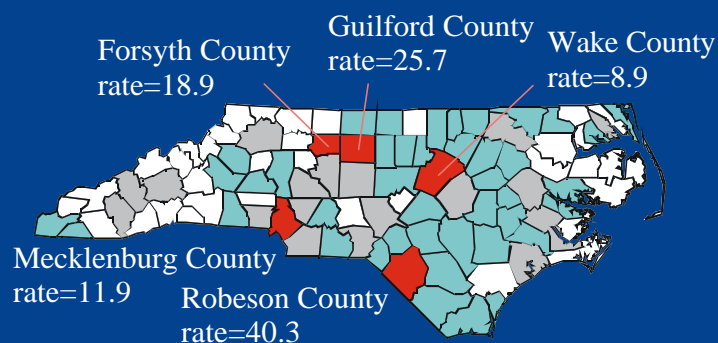
### *Why is Syphilis Elimination in the U.S. within our reach now?*

- Syphilis is a preventable and curable sexually transmitted disease (STD).
- Infectious syphilis is at the lowest rate ever reported: 2.6 cases/100,000 population (6,993 total cases).
- Syphilis is now very concentrated; half of all new cases in 1998 were reported from only 28 counties, which represent less than 1% of all U.S. counties.
- Other industrialized countries have already eliminated syphilis.

### *Why is it Important to Eliminate Syphilis in Forsyth County?*

- **In 1998 Forsyth County ranked 22<sup>nd</sup> in the nation** in new cases of infectious syphilis (54 cases) and had a rate 7 times higher than the national rate.
- **To reduce one of the most glaring racial disparities in health**
  - S 83% of cases are among African Americans (79% of cases nationally).
  - S The infectious syphilis rate in Forsyth County for African Americans is 14 times greater than the rate for white Americans.
- **To decrease spread of HIV infection**
  - S Syphilis increases HIV transmission at least 2-to-5 fold.
- **To improve infant health**
  - S Syphilis can be transmitted from mother to fetus during pregnancy causing stillbirths or congenital infection, some of which may result in persistent health problems.

### *Infectious Syphilis — North Carolina, 1998*



- 0 cases reported
- Rate ≤ 4/100,000\*
- Rate > 4/100,000\*
- One of 28 counties reporting half of new cases in the U.S.

\* Healthy People 2000 objective is 4/100,000

1998 U.S. rate: 2.6 cases/100,000 population

### *Forsyth County Responds*

- Step One, a community-based organization (CBO), and the Forsyth County Health Department are currently conducting a county-wide community assessment for syphilis elimination.
- Weekly syphilis educational sessions are presented at the county jail. Negotiations are underway to reduce the time before an inmate is tested for syphilis.
- Educational outreach in bars is ongoing in conjunction with three CBOs—Step One, HOPE, and Sickle Cell.

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